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MDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS.

COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR EVENING TELFGHAPH.

English Politics.

From the Tribune. The struggle for parliamentary reform in Great Britain has been in a great degree overshadowed by the more imposing events which are transpiring on the continent of Europe; but it is, nevertheless, well worthy of attention as one of the natural fruits of the victory of freedom in our own land, and as an effort to extend political rights to a class beretofore deprived of any real voice in public affairs. We have on former occasions described the general nature of the Reform bills now before the British Parhament, and commented upon the various stages of the contest over them. But for the sake of presenting a complete view of the subject, we recapitulate briefly the principal facts which are necessary to be known in order to comprehend the present position of affairs.

To comprehend the present position of affairs.

The existing law of England divides the members of the House of Commons between boroughs and counties, the former having much the larger share. In boroughs, the qualification of voters consists in the occupation of a house worth £10 (say \$50) a year. In counties, the mass of the electors consist of occupants of premises worth at least £50 a year, and owners in fee of land worth £2 a year or more. A vote may also be obtained by certain other qualitications not necessary now to mention, inasmuch as very few persons claim a vote upon any other grounds than those which we have stated. In 1852 and 1854 bills for the extension of the franchise were introduced by the Liberal Government of the day, but never made much progress. In 1859, the Tories being in power, but conscious that they only held office upon sufferance, in consequence of divisions among the Liberals, introduced a Reform bill, extending the right of suffrage to all persons in the counties occu-pying premises at a rent of £10 a year, but making no change in the borough or town qualifications of voters. On account of this defect the bill was relected. The Liberals then formed an administration, and brought forward a measure adopting a £6 franchise for the towns and a £10 one for the counties, but finally let the bill drop, and for six years nothing was done towards reform. The present Government, under the leader-

Earl Russell and Mr. Gladstone, introduced a bill, on the 12th of March last, reducing the qualifications of voters to a £7 rental in boroughs and £14 rental in counties, but making no change in the distribution of seats, that imortant question being reserved for a separate bill. Earl Grosvenor, who is a hybrid Liberal. Thereupon moved the House to refuse to con-sider this measure until the bill for the distribution of seats should be brought forward. This the Ministry declared would be tantamount to a vote of want of confidence; and after an exciting debate the Grosvenor motion was defeated though by only five majority, in a House con Taining a nominal Liberal majority of seventy. Thirty-three members, who upon any question other than the extension of the franchise would have voted for the Government, now voted against it. It was at this stage of the proceedings that we made our last comments upon the

After the Government had achieved this very dubious victory, the Reform bill was read a second time, and then laid over until the measure for redistribution of seats was introduced by Mr. Gladstone. This bill proposed to group together a number of little boroughs and to disfranchise others, each having a population of less than 8000, and now electing one or two members. By this means there would be forty-nine seats to be disposed of, which the Government proposed to divide equally between the largest counties and some of the large boroughs. On the suggestion of Mr. Bouverie, a supporter of the Government, it consented to have bills sent to the Committee of the Whole House, with instructions to consolidate them into one. But at this point new difficulties arose, which

The very moderate degree of reform propose 1 by these measures will, perhaps, seem to our readers a reason why the Opposition should have been also moderate. But, in reality, this wery fact has excited the special blitterness of the Tories and the hybrid Liberius—the Adulthe Tories and the hybrid Liberas — the Adullamites, as the Club people say—who act with them. They know that a raical Reform bill would stand no chance, waile it is difficult to oppose a scheme so mild as this. Accordingly, their bitterness has been intensified by the absence of any just cause for opposition. Unable to defeat the Mineur upon a square vote, they selze upon every photomity of mangling the bill, or throwing obsiscies in the way of its progress. Thus, a motion was made to require the insertion of provisions against briber in the insertion of provisions against bribery in the bill. This was sustained by the whole Tory party, not from any natred of bribery, but be-cause it would embarrass the bill with an encause it would empty rass the bill with an entirely distinct subject. On this ground the Ministry opposed the motion, but were heaten by a majority of ten. The next motion was made by Captain Hayter, a member from one of the small boroughs which would be grouped with another of the bill should pass. This motion was to the effect that the whole grouping scheme should be grouped. It was generally supposed that be abandoned. It was generally supp sed that this motion would be carried, in which case the Ministers would either have resigned, or have dissolved Parliament and appealed to the people at a new election. But at the eleventh hour the dangerous aspect of affairs on the continent made some of the anti-reform "Liberals" unwilling to turn out the Government. Captain Hay-ier, therefore, asked leave to withdraw his motion; but the Ministerial party, sure of deleating it on a vote, would not consent. Thereupon, all the opponents of the Ministry left the House, to avoid voting upon the question, which was accordingly unanimously nega-tived. But here the Tories fell into a trap. While they were getting beyond the reach of the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Liberals made good use of the time, passed the bill into committee, and immediately reported progress, thus getting rid of several unpleasant propositions of amend-ment from the other side, and putting the bill into a comparatively safe position.

into a comparatively safe position.

The next attack was made in committee, in the shape of an amendment, moved by Mr. Walpole, an oid-lashioned Tory, fixing the county franchise qualification at £20, instead of £14, as proposed by the Ministry. This was rejected by 14 majority. On the same night, Lord Stanley moved to postpone action on the reduction of the franchise qualification until the redistribution of seats had been settled. This was a complete supprise upon the House; but was voted down by 77 majority.

The result thus far is that the Liberal Ministry are at any rate assured of power for the rest

try are at any rate assured of power for the rest of this year, though their Reform bill is not so of this year, though their Reform but is not so secure. They will probably carry it through the House of Commons, but ast by a majority large enough to warrant them 'n compelling the House of Lords to sanction h, if, as is likely, it Is unwilling to do so.

The Impending War in Europe. From the Herald.

War in Europe new appears to be inwitable. The efforts, or pretended efforts, of diplomacy to prevent it were mipped in the bud. The conference of the great powers which was called for this purpose could not do anything, because the basis of conditions laid down was inadmissible to one of the belligerents at least, In fact, it must have been evident to the prime mover, Napoleon, in proposing the conference, that it never could accomplish anything under such conditions. The movement was a mere pretext in order to make a show of moderation id to cover up the deep political scheme at

In the letter of the Emperor Napoleon to the Prench Legislature we have some indications of what were the motives and objects of his Majesty. If Austria would cede Venetia to

Italy, it Prussia could be made stronger at the North-tost is, if she could appropriate Holsiein without resistance from Austria-and it other concess; as should be made to streagthen Prussia and Italy directly, and France indirectly, at the expense of Austria, there might te no war. In a word, if Austria would give up all *he hao been contending for, and much more, and would consent to be made the second power in Germany and a second-rate power in Europe, peace might be preserved. That is the substance of Napoleon's proposition. Did the French Emperor believe this possible? No: he is too sagacious for that. The proposed con-ference was a sham. Looking at all the circumstances, we cannot resist the natural conclusion that Napoleon has been an active and secret agent in fomenting the difficulties that exist in Europe. He detests the treaties of 1815, and consequently tayors a war that may destroy them and rearrange the map of Europe. What more natural? What more logical?

Austria, confident in her own strength, or at ast being convirced that she can lose no more by the war than she is required to do in the in-terests of peace, accepts the alternative of the sword. The whole element arrayed against her is revolutionary—a desire for change; and she expects the conservative sentiment of Europe will support her. How far this conservatism can be made available to give her moral or ma-terial aid has yet to be seen. We do not now enter into the question whether conservatism or revolution is best for the Old World; we simply refer to the facts of the case.
On the side of Austria we find the Papacy, the

temporal power of which would be destroyed he success of the Italian-Prussian alliance and the dynastic conservatism of all Europe, embracing, probably, Russia, most of the German States, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, as well as England. We mean on the side of Aus-tria in a moral sense; but in the event of a general European war these powers, or most of them, would naturally take the field with her. On the side of Italy and Prussia would be the mighty military power of France, 15, indeed, in such a general war as is possible Prussia dare separate herself from the declared sentiment of the middle German States.

The whole question as presented just now is full of complications, and no one can see the ultimate result. It is possible the intrigues of Napoleon may end in his own rain, and in the success of the old dynastic power of Europe, as the ambition of the first Napoleon ended; but it is more likely that the democratic element may seize the opportunity for a general revolution, and extert those concessions of Hberty which the masses anxious,y de-ire. shall watch with the greatest care events as they transpire, and present them to our readers; for the people of this country will necessarily feel on the other side of the Atlantic.

The Germanic Confederation.

From the Daily News. For some months to come, public attention will be more prominently directed towards Central Europe than to any other part of the world. That district is exclusively occupied by the Germanic Confederation, the organization of which was agreed upon in 1815, when the map of Europe was remodelled by those Treaties of Vienna to which the third Napoleon recently applied the term "detestable." Under an act of Constitution, signed at the Austrian capital, on June 8th, in that year, the various sovereignties which constitute what is called the German Empire were united in a Confederation (Deutsche Bund) of independent States. The first article of the Constitution defines the object of the Confederation to be for "the preservation of the internal and external security of Germany, and the independence and inviolability of the several German States;" and, by the second article, equality of rights and privileges are con-ceded to the members of the Confederation but the influence and votes in the Diet or Assembly are arranged and established according to the relative importance of the States.

The Confederation originally consisted of thirty-nine separate sovereignties, but that number has been reduced to thirty-four by the incorporation of five of the States with others. the dominions of the King of Prussia, the number of States will there be reduced to thirty-three.
The all rey-four States include one empire, five kingdoms, seven grand-duchies, one electorate, seven duchies, one landgravate, eight princi-palities, and four free cities. The four free cities are governed on republican principles; and the rest of the States are constitutional sovereignties, each having either one or two chambers. "So called" constitutional might perhaps be a more correct expression, when the manner in which the King of Prussia and some other of the petty tyrants have dictated to the representatives of the people is taken into consideration. The established religion of the southern States is Roman Catholic, while that of the middle and northern States is either Lutheran or Reformed

The greater part of the States are disconnected from territory that is not exclusively German. On the other hand, however, Austrian Germany does not comprise one-third the dominions of the Katser, and only about two-thirds of the kingdom of Prussia are within the boundaries of the Confederation. The Grand Duchy of Luxemburg and the Duchy of Limburg, though part of the Confederation, are subject to the rule of the King of Holland, who votes in the German Diet in respect thereof. Previous to the Dano-German war the King of Denmark held similar jurisdiction over Holstein and Lauenberg: but Prussia now firmly holds the latter within her grasp, and the possession of the former is the subject of dispute. The Duchy of Schleswig, though heretefore subject to the same sovereignty as Holstein, forms no part of the Confederation; it has, however, long been the desire of the minor German States that it should be incorporated with Holstein, and ad-

mitted into the German family of nations.

The Congress of the Confederation is a Diet of Plenipotentiaries, which sits in permanence at Frankfort-on-the-Main. This body acts in one of two torms—either as a General Assembly, or Plenum, in which the States have votes according to their importance, but every State casting at least one vote; or, as the ordinary Assembly, in Committee of the Confederation, or Carles, in which seventeen votes are divided among the thirty four States. In the larger form six of the principal States have each four votes, five have principal States. In the larger form any of the principal States have each tour votes, five have three votes each, three have two votes each, and the rest one vote each. In the lesser form one vote is given to each of the eleven leading States, and the remaining six votes are parcelled out among the minor States, in one instance seven States having a co-partnership in a single vote. In all cases where changes in the organic laws of the Confederation are to be considered or made, or when a new member is to be admitted into the Diet, or when peace or war is to be declared, the proceedings must be in Pleaum, or General Assembly; but in other cases the ordinary Assembly, or Caries, may act either in a legi-lative or executive capacity. By the fifth article of the Act of Confederation Austria is invested with the right of presiding in the Diet.

According to the military lists for 1864, the army of the Confederation then comprised 698,588 combatants, and 76,120 non-combatants; total, 774,708 men; and the artillery embraced. e98,588 combatants, and 76,120 non-combatants; total, 774,708 men; and the artillery embraced 1206 field pieces and 247 siege gnns. The ranks are filled by contingents from the several States, contributed in proportion to their relative importance. The entire Federal force is divided into ten corps d'armee and a division of reserve. Of these Austria supplies the first; second, and third corps; Prussia the fourth, fifth, and sixth; Bavaria the seventh, and the lest of the States the remaining three corps and the division of reserve. There are five Federal fortheses, which in time of peace are garrisoned as follows:—Mayence, the strongest and most important of the fortresses, by Austrians and Prussian; in equal numbers; Luxemburg chiefly by Prassians; Landau by Bavarians; Bastadt, by troops of Baden and Prussia; and Tim by these of Wurtemburg, Bavaria, and Austria.

Austria. In presenting an insight into the origin and organization of the Germanic Confederation, we must not omit to speak of the Zollverein, or

Commercial Usion, which, although within the Confederation, does not embrace the whole of the German States. Previous to the formation of this Commercial Union, each State had a separate system of custom-houses, tariffs, eys, weights and measures, the existence of which was a serious embarrassment to trade. To obviate this, Prussia, in 1828, laid the foundation of the Zollverein, by entering into a com nercial union with Hesse Darmstadt, and twenty-two other States have since joined them. The treaties which bind these States in this commercial compact are not of a permanent nature, but are open to revocation at stated terms.

War between the two leading memoers of this "happy family"—a war in which it is inevitable other members will take part—can scarcely terminate without making considerable changes in the Germanic Confederation, but whether or no there changes will be beneficial to the German nation, no person can possibly predict. The latest European advices inform us that the German Diet, at the instance of Austria, and by a vote of nine to six, has resolved upon mobilizing the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th Corps of the Federal army, such corps comprising the whole of the confingents of the German States excepting those of Austria and Prussia. Previous to the action of the Diet Prussia declared that she should consider the adoption of such a decision as a violent dissolution of the Confederation, and after the vote was taken her representative pronounced her secession, and withdrew from the Assembly. The Austrian representative in-sisted upon the indissolubility of the Confederawhich declaration the Diet voted its

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